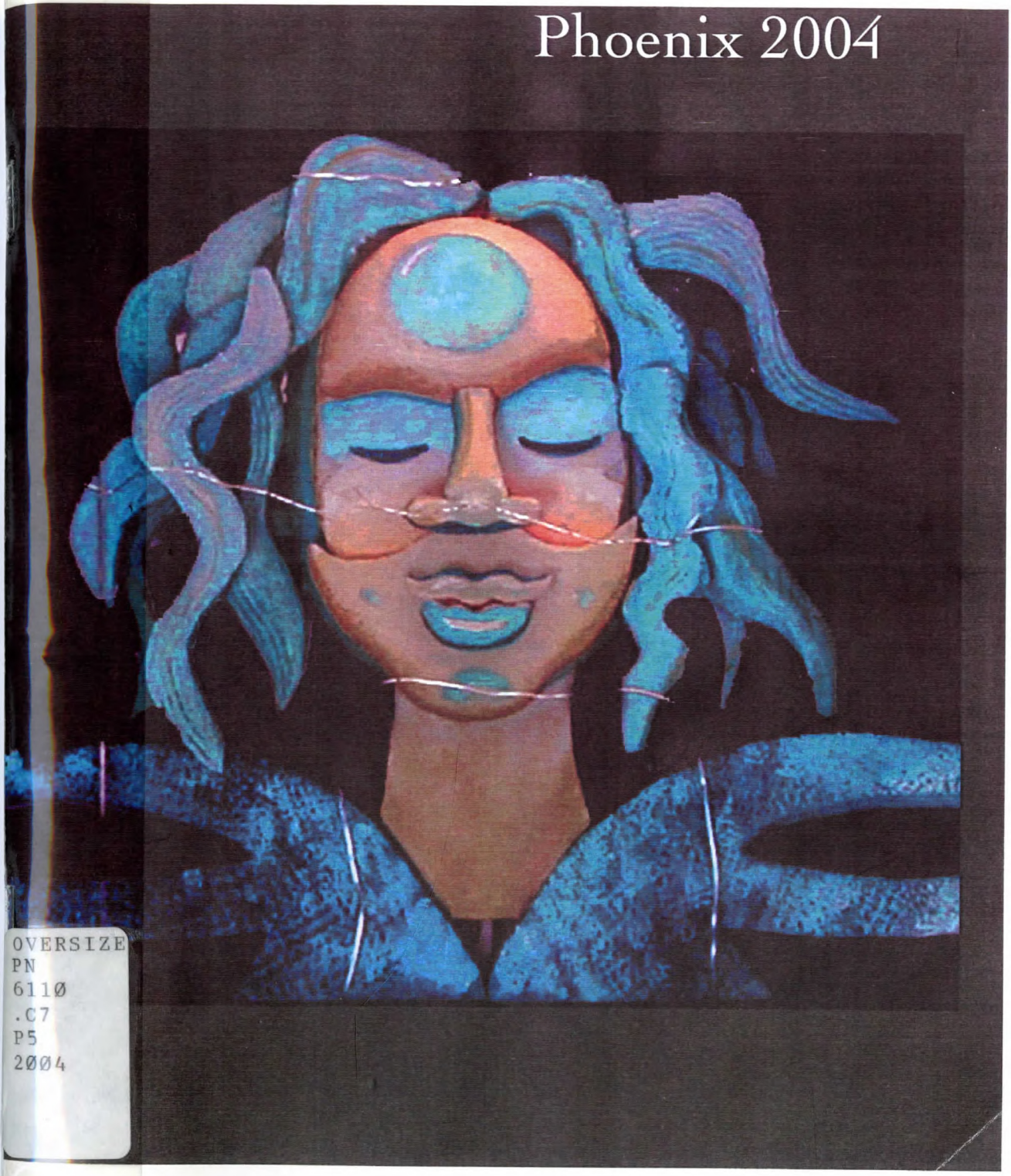
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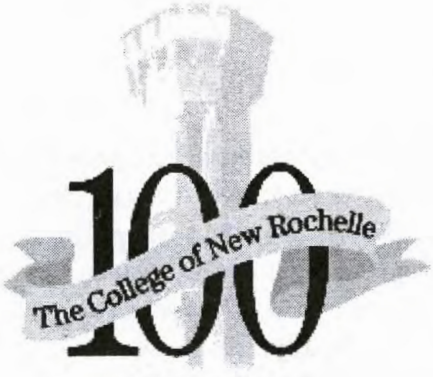
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Phoenix

Arts and Literary Magazine

Volume 29

Centennial Edition



1904 – 2004

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Cover Art: "Mind Trap" by Pamela Flores

in memoriam
Anne Houle, class of 2002

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Phoenix 2004

Volume 29

Centennial Edition

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Dear Reader,

The pens, pencils, paintbrushes, and vision of the women of The College of New Rochelle have ignited the pages of this magazine for the past 29 years. This year, on the College's Centenial Anniversary, *Phoenix* rises once again in the passionate pursuit of excellence and expression for which it is known. This edition emerges as a representation of the transition, growth and elevation in being in which we as students take pride. *Phoenix*, like the College and its students, has seen success despite adversity and the triumph through trials necessary to foster reincarnation into a stronger and more beautiful legacy.

I would like to thank the contributing artists and writers of the college community for bravely shàring their creative works; our advisor, Dr. Cynthia Kraman, for her guidance; and the entire *Phœnix* staff for the long nights, hard work, and dedication invested in producing this special edition.

May the contents of this book inspire you to grow and transition.

-Jenell L. Wilkie
Executive Editor

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The Unavoidable

Ewa Tabak

at the beginning

your heart was followed by
your words were followed by
your actions

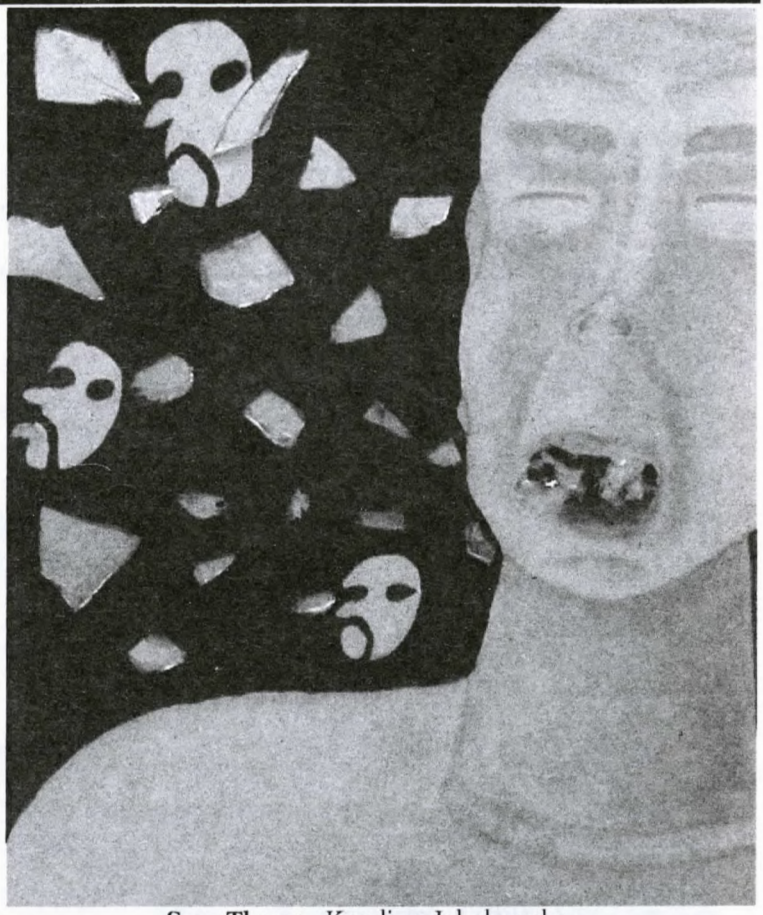
in
the
course
of
time

your heart has changed
your words could not

(people were listening)

your actions were accompanied by
your bottle of Southern Comfort

at the end



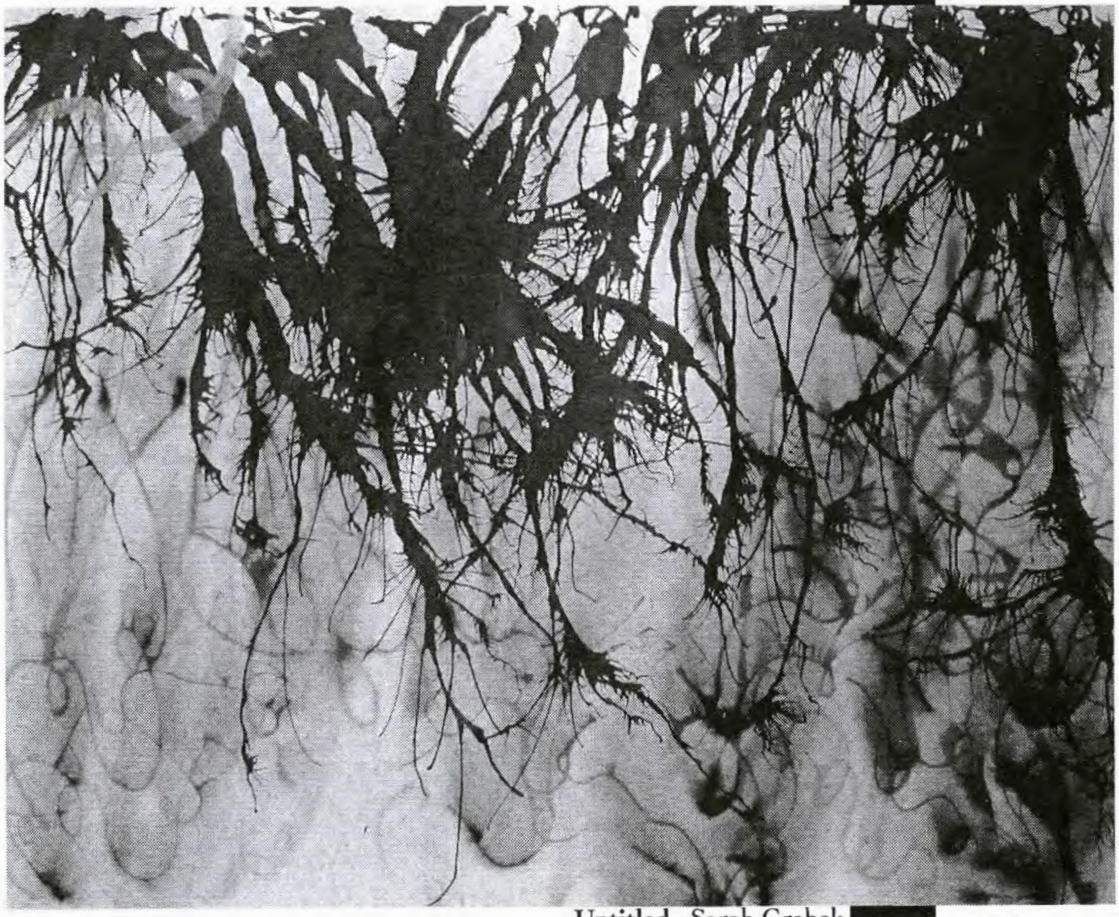
Sore Throat Karolina Jakubowska

Salsa

Pilar Rivera

I was asked to dance in the Puerto Rican Parade…
How could I resist?
I listened to the smooth sounds of that salsa beat…
My body swayed from left to right.
PA – PA – PA – PA – PA, the soft *clave* lingers in every song…
My Puerto Rican People begin to mimic the sound with their hands, their voices and their feet.
Sweat trickles down my spine…
A stain in the shape of a heart crept on my red, white and blue outfit.
Whistles are blowing, maracas are shaking, hands are clapping…
We all get excited.
I continue to shimmy my shoulders and hips in opposite directions…
The crowd cheers more fiercely now.
The float in front of us bangs on the conga drum…
The boricua blood pulsates in my veins.
I can see our flags flying high in the sky…
This brings happy tears to my eyes.
A circle forms around me of my fellow dance partners…
My Leo ego is stroked
I can see a handsome papi looking dead at me from the crowd…
I began to shake my *culito* faster now and blow a kiss in his direction.
The light is red…
We let the non – parade goers pass by.
The cops smell marijuana coming form central park…
The dealers are arrested.
My mother screams my name…
I cut through the dancers and give her kiss on the lips.
My throat is parched…
Mom hands me her bottle of water.
Jimmy gets a little closer to me…
I gyrate my hips close to his.
We continue to dance…
He gets horny.
My mom smiles…
Make her proud but she thinks I am fresh.
Everyone stepping on one…
No one is ever missing a beat.

I meet the street artist known as De La Vega...
I get horny.
We danced for forty blocks...
My calves are in pain.
De La Vega gives me his autograph...
I danced in the Puerto Rican parade...
I'll do it again.



Untitled Sarah Grabek

Diary of a Big Girl: Living Single in the City

Kadiatu Conteh

After every single failed relationship with a man, everyone always says to me, "Don't worry there's plenty of fish in the sea." Well, which sea are they talking about? The waters I've been swimming in have been shallow and empty. Being a single girl in New York has proven to be quite a quest. Dating seems simple enough on a broad scale. There are 2,803,579 adult men in New York City. That number seems to diminish when you take into consideration the openly gay, the in-the-closet-brother, serial non-sista daters, the insane, the convicted felons, and the faithfully married men. That leaves you with maybe three men who may just end up being related to you. The pickings are beyond slim, they are damn near anorexic. Now, take me for example. My dating history is colorful and comedic. For in the city that never sleeps, my love life is down right comatose. It's ridiculous. I feel like I'm at the lower third tier of the dating caste system: The Big Girl.

Yes, I am a big girl. Obese, obtuse, thick in all the wrong places, fat, rotund, and whatever other insulting moniker that is given to us overweight folk. I am a fairly tall woman, at 5'8. My fat hugs my frame and you can see that I am all woman. I try my best to preach the word of the big girl. See many of my plus-sized sisters don't know big women are just as sexy as Lara Flynn Boyle. Fat truly is not an excuse to hang your head low or dress slovenly. Oh No!!! It is not a reason to be funky and smell of cottage cheese in too tight or too loose fitted clothing. No Sir!!! We must own our beauty and confidence. You would never catch yours truly looking like a hot mess. I am beautiful. It's not just my pretty face or dazzling personality, it is all of me, every single ounce and inch. Despite all of this, I have yet to meet a man that can see past my phat ass or extra pounds. I know, hard to believe. The men that do come in my direction are boring, over 50 years old, missing teeth, drunk, dead broke, and just plain not my type.

It's very difficult to maintain confidence in yourself, when no matter how beautiful you feel and look a man may never "see." You remain invisible to their eyes. You want to scream out, "What in the world do I have to do to be seen?!" When I hit that point, I decided not to let the opposite sex chip away at my spirit. These are the tales of my sordid dating experience and dare I say, sex life of being big, beautiful and single and in New York City.

Stretch

Carrie Margolis

You have scattered shrapnel of yourself into my reality
Everywhere you linger in some form of resist
You have burned holes of solitude into my chest
I am suffocating under your presence
You still loiter in cracks holding on firmly as mold does to the damp
Please just let me be

I am shrieking for freedom



Untitled Shanese Brownlee

I Don't Want Anyone to See

Jennifer Davidson

I don't want anyone to see

To see a pain I can not seem to find.
I know it's there, deep inside me.
It's there everyday eating at me.

This pain that won't form into words.
It is my pain that I can't understand.
It's deeper than my soul
And stronger than my mind.

I try not to think about my pain.
The words still don't come
And my thoughts still don't explain.

But for today...

The battle within me has ended.
This time I think I won the battle but

The pain may think the same.





Untitled Amy Perry

I've Emotionally Died

Surena Simpson

Now I lay before thee a shell of a body
To walk before thee like a drone
One with no feelings and controversy
Moving to one single tone

I shall walk amongst thee
To try to find my new emotional home
But for now
I've been emotionally separated from thee
To survive to see another lifetime without thee

I've died emotionally
To survive spiritually so people like you
Can not use and abuse me
Let alone confuse me

But in my death, I shall grow
Grow emotionally to find
The new and better emotional me

Now as I go looking for my new home
Hopefully you will not become that drone
I use to be



Sea-Monkey Self Belle Burchill

Stained

Claire Fu

Waking up this fine January morning, I find myself at pause.

What am I doing today? Interrupted by a sudden insertion of time with all its banalities, my body did not wish to be moved. I lay there, awake yet everything and anything would have expressed it differently.

Get up. My eyes, unable to sustain the brightness entering the room through the empty windows, voluntarily close. Again merged in darkness my mind finds surcease from all perplexing questions, the unattractiveness of words and unsuitability of gestures.

Get up. So far away is a voice that beckons for my attention, silently screaming and banging at my skull. Griping at my consciousness, reality alarms me of the impending time.

A child enters my mind. Attempting to capture her innocent laughter and untainted courage I run after her, out into the streets that wind around in complete circles of perpetual time. Down the empty corridors where crack is dealt and souls are auctioned causes tears to disrupt the stillness of the ocean. To a far off horizon, ambivalent like twilight. And the lapses of memory cause my mind to search for closure.

Get up. My eyes open and looking off into the distance, that scenic moment once again paints itself in my mind. Capturing that child so perfectly I can almost hear her voice as it blends with the wind. I'll forever remember it. But the tears that suddenly form in my eyes fall like the rain as I watch this perfect painting wash away.

Stained. All that is left is a stain where the best moments of my life once were.

Rest

Kristi Marquis

Recapture for me would you the meaning of existence
Time warps its way into the cracks of eternity
And I rest

There was this one time
When everything was so transparent
Tears were salty memories soon to be forgotten
Now it seems so real to me
As if someone picked me up and just dropped me to the heavy ground
Your voice graces my knowledge less and less
I am wrapped in my own images and I try to accept where my mistakes have taken me
And with this I rest

I refill the cup that seems to never be full
Perhaps someday the rain that falls from above with rejuvenate my soul
Maybe someday I will learn to leave it alone
When she turned her back on me I thought
WelL..this can't be it
I know I was put here for something and it wasn't just to please you
All those times that I called and you never answered the phone
When I would write and write until my hand cramped at the thought of one more word
Then I knew that I must move on and conquer my denial
With that I thought I must rest

I continue to haunt myself with the words of reassurance
This false laughter has me losing sleep
I can't even look into the eyes of my own mother without feeling a gut wrenching pain
Just the mere thought of reconciliation twists my stomach for a loop so tight I can barely breathe
And this is the family I miss
The girl I love loves another and with no false tone she tells me she still loves me
So to the arms of my savior I fall to the evil contender
I am bound for an undisputed downfall in the making
This urge for renewal is winning me



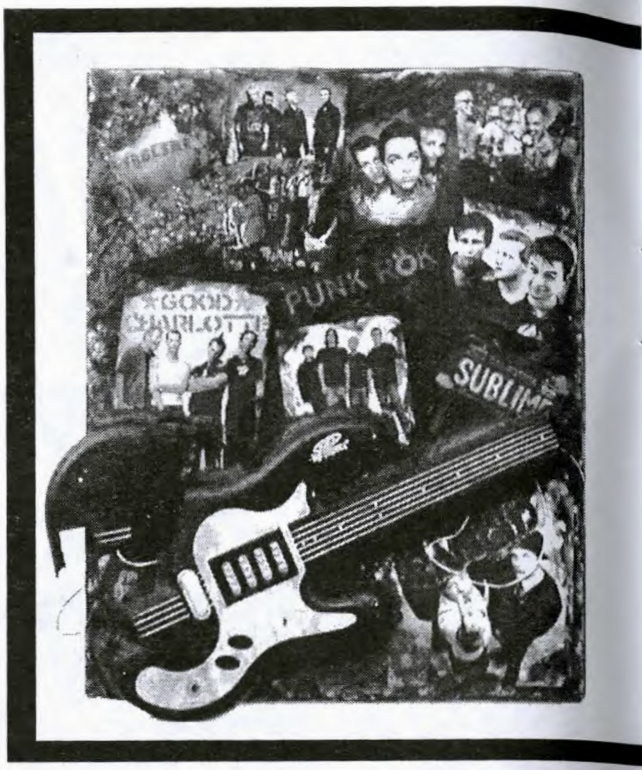
Untitled Carmen Hernandez

And I am drowning in snow and tasting its effects
A father whom I did not know has given me but one thing
That is his pain and his mistakes all rolled into one and ingested
I don't even know who I am anymore
With this
I cannot rest

I Am Not Made

Keisha Smith

To love another,
My Unmaking
And it is for this reason
That I love all around me.
Mine
Eyes are fixed to beauty
So that I recognize her
In everyone
That stands still.
Never
Going anywhere
But always with the desire to depart
So,
I check in my luggage
And board the craft
In comfort and in faith
Taking off into
Higher altitudes
Tending to forget
My feet on the ground
Breeding escape through seduction
And I breathe further
Into its unknown
Through soft white floating
Turbulence
Grasping handles
Whenever possible
Fastening seat belts
Whenever seated
(This is throughout the entire flight)
My destination on my one way ticket
Is printed in Black
Similar to prior tickets purchased
And the one I will buy
On the way back



Mine
Eyes are so fixed on beauty
And the sun
Looks so much more magnificent
Face to face
And through the window
Of this craft
Which descends (much like my *raison d'être*)
When I am so close,
That I can see its warmth
Through my unmaking.



Homàge to Punk Karolina Jakubowska

Dirty

Jennifer Davidson

White ice chunks covered in a layer of filth can't possible make anything clean
The black dirt infested snow has almost melted away
but the world will be no cleaner after it has all gone
The sky is still gray, the whole world seems gray to me
(Spring is so far away, with its fresh green and warm sun)
Even the sun appears to be gray in the frigidness
Maybe I am the only one who sees the gray float before my eyes
It glides past my windows when I watch a warm fire
And it sits on my shoulder when I walk through the smog
It's wrapped around me tighter than my comforting blankey
It won't let go of my mind or my heart or anything else
It will linger forever – this gray, if not outside, then in…
In me, where it manifests to epic proportions
Where it clings to every thought and infects everyday with bleakness
Even the spring won't scare it, the hot sun on my wanton belly won't shake it from me
There is nothing that will clean the grayness off of me or clear it out of my eyes
The only cure for the dirtiness of my mind and body is

fresh white snow

My Favorite Place

Erin Flores

Four walls, decades old
Many inhabitants have come and gone
Memories never fade from the
Four walls, decades old.
A small space for a Large mind
To grow outside of the
Four walls, decades old.
Posters and pictures moved into boxes
Leaving just
Four walls, decades old.
One Last goodbye, bittersweet in flavor
As a smile and a tear descend on my face
Reminding me of my favorite
Four walls, decades old.



Self-Portrait Kerri Mahon



Save My Skin

Keisha Smith

I am not sure of anything.
At times I beg
That something should open up
And take me in
The same thing
That has you locked up
And trapped within, I was
Spit out like Jonah
From the belly of the great white
World
That we built together
From visions of the same mysterious thing
That surrounds you,
And at one time me.
I look back
And furthermore because
Looking to the future
Is shaded and grey
[Much like the decisions within this current day]
Let me back into the security of our atmosphere
Place a strong gravity underneath me
To keep me there
Circulate air and blow it freely
Throughout my body entire
Breathe life into death and
Save my skin.

Nothing to do in Tennessee

Allyssandra Pane-Berrios

A large public high school auditorium is maybe half full with people who actually paid money to see The Glass Menagerie *performed by mediocre talents. The audience is spread out into various groups: parents and other disinterested relations to the actors down in front; faculty strewn along the edges hiding from students and their parents, there to support the school that hasn't given them tenure yet; members of the administration who have shown up to make sure that the faculty has shown up, standing near exits in order to make a quick getaway; of course siblings and friends of the cast as far back as possible, hiding from their parents, teachers, security and any other authority figure that may be present, there to support the cast, clap, flatter and cheer obnoxiously loud for their favorites and to snicker at everyone else; and the others, teenagers not otherwise engaged, who figure that they can spare three dollars out of the ten in their pockets to see the spectacle, and still afford dinner afterwards at The Diner: the feature presentation.*

The show is presented. Al and/or Dave, and/or they, and/or the others react to it.

Al: Wait, was that a mistake?

Dave: What?

Al: He said "my sister, Laura," was that a mistake?

Dave: No, the character's name is Laura ...Yes Al, Laura is playing Laura.

Al: And Laura's name is Wingfield, and Laura's name is Infield?

Dave: Uh-huh.

Al: OK, I guess that's really only amusing, or confusing to us. ...It's less complicated for the rest of the cast anyway.

Dave: Didn't you have to read this play for class a little while ago?

Al: I didn't have to... yeah I got through most of it. Hey, they just cut out a line!

Dave: You didn't remember the name of one out of only three main characters, but you remember enough to know that they cut a single line?

Al: Yeah, it was a reference to slavery or something. The mother said that she would play the part of "the Darky" while they were clearing the table. Why did they cut that line out? I don't see any black people in the audience, and there are certainly *none* in the theater. Who are they afraid of offending?

Dave: The white people.

Al: I guess that's the reason it's considered offensive. It makes white people uncomfortable...Oh, wait there's one here--uh--what's her name? She's in my physics class...

On stage Tom lights a cigarette.

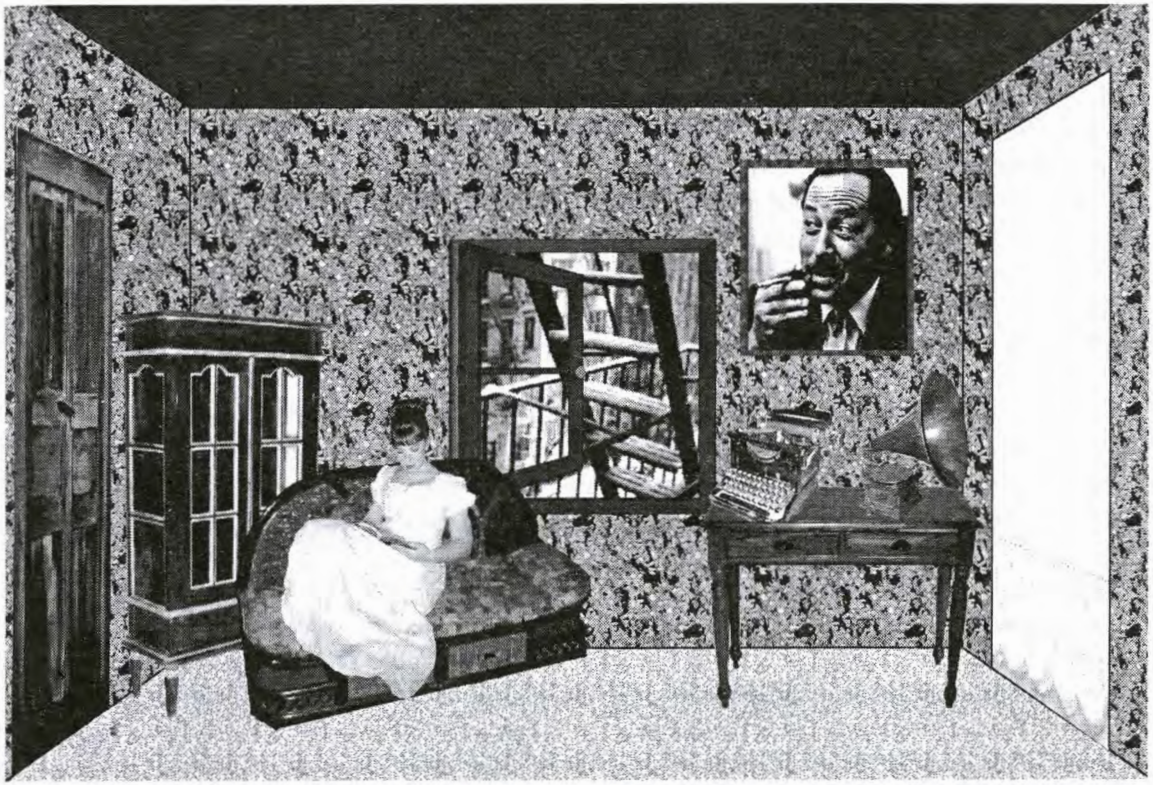
Dave: One what? Who?

Al: There is one, in the theater. The black girl. I forget her name. It's unique. I remember thinking that I had never heard it before.... Is he really smoking? Now, that offends me, we're not allowed to smoke in here.

Dave: We could go outside. When is intermission anyway? There is an intermission right?

Al: Yeah, it's a fairly short piece but they need to sell refreshments or this may be the last production of the year.

Dave: Well, I thought intermission would be



Glass Menagerie Set Design Tara Devlin

the best part of the play, but you just ruined my appetite.

Al: It's safer that way, the refreshments were probably homemade, and the diner food isn't exactly safe either.

Dave: We could go somewhere else…

Al: We could…

From on stage (Tom): "I go to the movies because - I like adventure."

Dave: We should go to the movies more often, I like adventure too.

Al: We can't afford any more adventure.

From on stage (Amanda): "Irish on both sides! Gracious! And doesn't drink?"

Al: They didn't cut that line out.

Dave: Maybe they're all Irish and drink.

The stage lights go out and the house lights come on. Intermission is fifteen minutes and no one can get out of the auditorium fast enough. Small groups of teenagers slip outside and away from the crowds, fleeing behind one of the large prison like concrete walls. Green Day and Santana can be heard in the background, fused and animated by some arcane rhythm. Lighters, cigarettes, and other various incriminating materials are passed around. There is an early winter chill in the air so boys and girls huddle together conveniently to keep warm. Aside from the physical indulgence this also serves to prevent the wind from blowing out their matches. An aura of heat surrounds the young bodies. Murmuring can be heard but what's said is arbitrary. No sense can be made of what is spoken only what is

by a swirling cloud of heavy breathing and ash. As the beautiful interlude ends some decide to hit The Diner early, graciously offering to save seats for the others, smoking is permitted there; some head toward the parking lot to sit on their run down cars and play, on their outrageously grand stereo systems, the music that speaks to them and screams at their parents, smoking is permitted there as well. The rest put out their withered butts, roll their eyes, finish their heavy breathing with a round of sighs, and not quite knowing why return to their seats. The house lights blink for a few irritating minutes and finally dim. Scene six begins and a large picture of "The high school hero" is displayed on a screen; he is in a bad sailor costume.

Al: Billy is playing "The high school hero" the "nice ordinary young man?" Is that supposed to be a joke?
Dave: Actually, I think it is funny.
Dave: Do you remember what production Jim, "The high school hero" was in?
Al: Yes?
Dave: ... *Pirates of Penzance*. And what did Billy star in last spring?
Al: Oh God! How much longer is this?
Dave: The program says one more scene after this one. That fire escape does not look very safe.
Al: Probably because it's cardboard and very flammable from all the unnecessary paint.
Dave: I hope he doesn't leave his cigarette on it for too long, we may have to leave the building, again for a cigarette.
Al: I used to use my fire escape as a porch too. But the fire escape of this building is too dangerous to stand on.
Dave: Well, you're only on the second floor anyway, a few broken bones is better than burning to death.

Al: Yeah... Khadija, that's her name!
Dave: That was random.
Al: No, the black girl in the theater, her name is Khadija; she's not in the production though, I just saw her... outside, selling refreshments...
Dave: Oh, yeah... Is Tennessee Williams dead? Cause if he wasn't he is now.
Al: Ummm, I think he died in like 1983.
Dave: The year we were born.

The play ends, the audience claps, actors bow, undue credit is given to everybody, bouquets are distributed to various members of cast and crew, Tennessee Williams rolls around in his grave, and the others rush for the door.

A few minutes later, looking through the window, past the reflection of the pink neon "Open 24 hours" sign one can see The Diner filling with young people who have no where else to go. After ordering burgers only to eat the fries they spend the next few hours resisting their curfews to do nothing but drink coffee flavored water by the pot until they are nauseous and empty their change into the juke box to hear "Hotel California" for the millionth time. They don't have money to tip the waitress.

Finally, they make the trip home on foot because they are broke and there are not nearly enough cars. Sneaking in the doors of their quaint suburban homes or tiny fire traps hoping not to meet the wrath of their legal guardians they find their parents sound asleep in their suburban queen sized beds or passed out on their tiny tenement compatible sofas. Sleep does not come for them until morning; caffeine is the dreamer's emissary when sleep is otherwise engaged. The sunrise is beautiful, but the fire escapes are empty. And their parents will never believe that they spend their long nights sitting in a diner.



Alana Ruptak **Heart Strings** (for K)

An Instant of Ryan

Carrie Margolis

The loneliness from the waters of the Hudson crept close, too close

But confusion is welcome here like every traveler that passes by

However words are not spoken only the sounds of vibrations will be heard

Her hips pulsed while waiting in line at the coat check

I choked once again thinking desire resembles nothing

The night closes with the constant chill of air

All Along...

Banae T. Vickers

You once wrote me a poem,
For my birthday as a gift.
It was called "All Along", and
Fulfilled my dream and wish

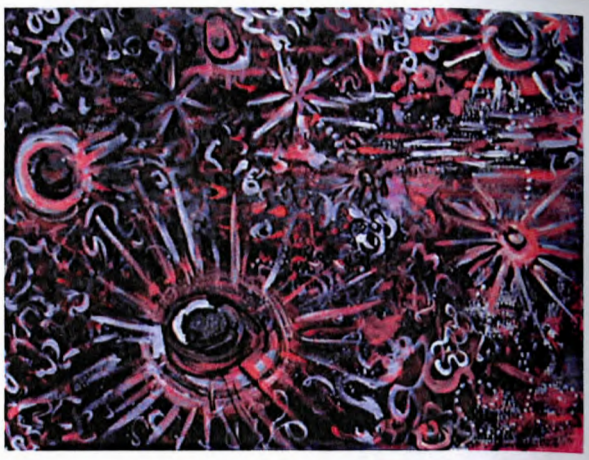
My wish to be with you,
Forever and a day.
To share all that is real with you,
In every possible way.

To hold you in my arms,
So dear and so true.
To know that my love,
Has "all along" been in you.

That you for your love, your
Wit and your charm.
Thank you for being there
So I could cry in your arms.

That you for fulfilling,
My ever-aching wish.
For giving me everything,
On a platter-sized dish.

You don't really miss
What you have until it's gone.
So thanks for being with me,
All this time, "All Along."









Fetish Victoria Ramos

Fetish

Richelle Fiore

My flesh eagerly receives the gentle caress
That elevates it against the
Scraping pain of pavement.
A soft, molded buttress against
The firmness of the sole is my savior.

The ring of a bell
Plastic scraping against another form,
Sometimes more heady—the
Rustle of paper in the palm
Now cardboard protection houses my fetish.

Slipping into them for our first time
Proposed perfection
Scant silk of stockings as the only barriers

The ecstasy felt only hours ago
No longer enraptures me

If only my ascension was four inches

instead of two

The sensation would last.

Screwed

Talena Bell

Born into a home where color was not proud
Anger grew inside this black little child
Group homes, sex, and failure was her mission
Her foul mouth gave way before she could use human intuition
Love passed one time or two
Substituting pleasure for love in place of responsibility
She's seen it all and now she's dying
She lives daily knowing she has AIDS and she can't stop her daughter's crying
A wanted woman...more dead than alive
Always breaking her promises so much that family and strangers wait for her demise
It's too late to say sorry and too late to start again
So much pain crack... [no that's too cheap]
Cocaine becomes her friend.
Her only hope is the first child she birthed
But she too is miserable drinking, fucking and getting high off the earth
The last good apple turning bad with the batch
Save this starving beauty... make her new

A Cold Night

Heidi Parillo

A cold night
A dark sky
You're everywhere,
All around me.
Street lamps, tree limbs.
A phantom spectator, stalking
my every move.
Sooty clouds of smoke from my
cigarette.
Look, but don't touch,
These raven images hold beauty
in their truth.



Walk on the Beach Rose Wardell



Swan Goddess Jing Jin

Letting Go

Kathryn M. Tyranski

This was the place they met—a street corner that held no significance to the small town it belonged to. They had passed each other probably on a daily basis for at least three months since Regina had moved to the small town where she had accepted a job as the manager in the small town's only inn—The Hollow.

The town that is being spoken of is a town where normalcy is of utmost importance. Anything out of the ordinary would cause a riot in the town square. Regina, although a newcomer understood the consequences of living in such a town and as the newcomer she did not know the limit that would cause the enactment of these unspoken consequences. She was hired as The Hollow's manager because she had a reputation for bringing success wherever she went. The Hollow was in desperate need of business and in the twelve

weeks Regina had been there, the occupancy had tripled.

Everything was fine until, on her daily stroll to work, on no particular day of importance, she bumped into Barbara. Unlike Regina, Barbara had grown up in this small town and was well-known, but no one truly knew her. There wasn't a key that fit in the lock that kept her door shut.

"I'm so sorry!" exclaimed Regina as she crouched to the floor in an attempt to help Barbara gather the briefcase of papers that had been victim in the crash between the two women.

"No need to apologize, I wasn't paying attention to where I was going," Barbara replied. "Morning rush hour on the sidewalks of Paxton is a dangerous time."

"Well, this is my first crash. Do you need my information in case you want to claim insurance?" Regina asked curiously.

"I think that would be the civil thing to do," Barbara communicated simultaneously. There was a knock on the door of Barbara that had been silent for nearly her entire existence as Regina handed her a business card with her home number on the back.

Reddington and Odyssey would remain a place of fondness for these women—the place that began this tale. As Regina walked away from the situation, she felt a tingle of uncertainty in the events prior to that moment. "What is going on? What was I thinking?" she thought as her mind started to race suddenly.

Meanwhile, Barbara walked with a purpose on her way to the accounting job she held at the First Bank of Paxton. Numbers had always been of great importance to her, but the seven digits on the back on the small business card she clutched in her hand meant so much more. The feeling of excitement aroused her, but she didn't know what would become of the situation. "There is no situation... we bumped into each other, but she gave me her number, that's not normal... it's nothing," as thoughts came like rapid fire in Barbara's mind. "It's up to me to make the call. Tonight."

Because both of these women walked to and from their respective places of work, they must have set a new record in making it from point A to point B. The reason why was unclear to both. There was an attraction, a connection, a signal that had been discovered in the encounter that very morning.

As Regina crossed the town square in the direction of her abode, she spotted Barbara exiting the bank. She froze and found herself staring off into the distance at a person who had reignited feelings that she thought were forever lost when her former love perished in a fire.

Barbara felt the gaze upon her back as she was walking and turned around to see Regina. To say the least, she was certainly filled with a feeling of extreme nervousness. "Guess I won't need to use that number you gave me tonight," she called out across the square." A few heads of the townspeople turned at that sentiment. Their busybody interrogative looks had been sharpened in noticing that the comment passed by Barbara was to another woman.

"Guess not... want to get dinner?" Regina called back and feeling that same shiver of

uncertainty as the townsfolk turned in her direction. Barbara walked over and nodded in agreement and the two walked away from the square into the diner—Jake's. The town square was quiet as the two women walked away *together* into the dinner and then once the diner's door shut behind them, a buzz erupted. Ordinary had been infiltrated and someone was going to pay.

Sparks flew across the dinner table as Regina and Barbara experienced the connection made earlier. Barbara's door was finally opened. No words were needed. The seeds of a relationship that would yield great love and history in Paxton were being planted. It's not that love had never graced Paxton before; it was just its context. Two women in love— in a relationship... a mind-blowing concept to some. Actually, it was a mind-blowing concept to everyone except Regina and Barbara.

Relationships are challenging enough. Being the first couple to be publicly recognized in a homosexual relationship in a town that for over one-hundred years had never seen such a thing, doesn't make the dynamic of a relationship much easier. Undoubtedly, this story wouldn't be worth telling if Regina and Barbara didn't display extreme strength and conviction in their relationship.

Naturally, they received sharp looks and somewhat forced conversation at The Hollow and the First Bank of Paxton and the townsfolk were certainly talking and some embraced the change feeling it was long overdue while others felt Barbara and Regina should be "burned at the stake," as it was once said.

"It's all about letting go and living your life for you and only you," Barbara would tell Regina when the light of acceptance was barely at a flicker.

Regina would reply, "I've had to let go of all the things that I have loved because of uncontrollable forces, but I will not let my beliefs or actions be scrutinized. I have made a new beginning and I will not allow this town to deny me my happiness."

Barbara exclaimed with passion and impatience, "Change has to begin somewhere and if it is with us, then I say so be it. I would rather be the catalyst of change for future generations who will also face discrimination, but will be a little less bombarded." Ten months ago, Barbara's mystery, her beliefs were locked away behind closed doors and now they were out and no one would be able to close her door.

A silence fell between the couple. It was winter and snow was on the ground. The silence was as quiet as the flurries of snow that had fallen that year. In the midst of the silence, an understanding was reached. Love would prevail and the discomfort caused would be a sacrifice the townsfolk of Paxton would have to endure to make the world a better place.

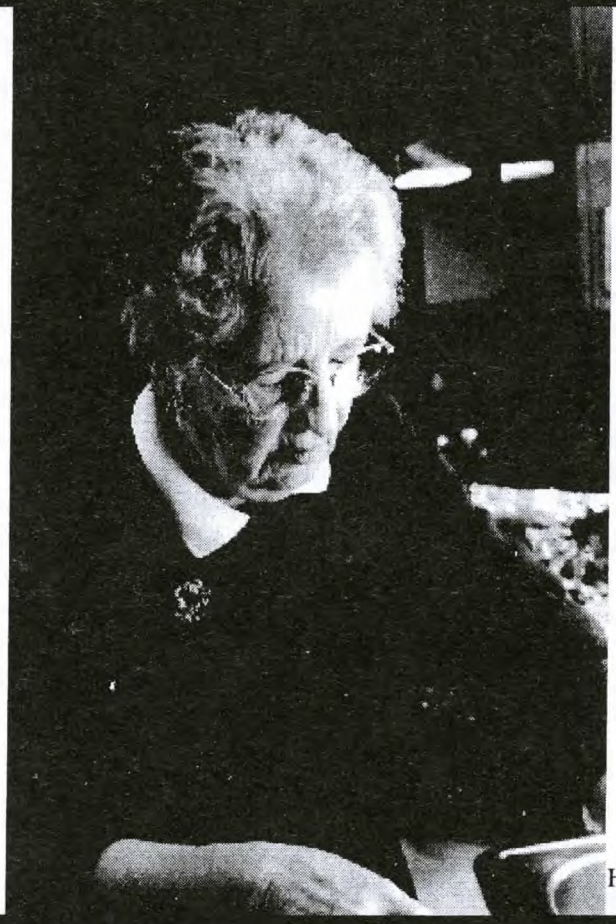
On their one-year anniversary, Barbara and Regina walked boldly into Paxton town square, holding hands. A curious little girl of about twelve walked up to them as they were sitting on the bench in the middle of Paxton's social center. Regina and Barbara sat still, unmoved waiting for a snide comment out of the child's mouth. The girl, said in a very matter-of-factly way (that only children can master), "I hope you know that not everyone thinks you are bad people for being in love. I am happy for you. I hope that I can find love

like this one day." She smiled and walked away.

There was hope. As Regina listened to the twelve-year-old's comment she let go of everything she had been holding onto—the feeling of anxiousness that only comes with disbelief in the strength of oneself. She turned to Barbara and softly kissed her and said, "It's all about letting go."

Years later, sources say that Regina and Barbara remained a couple until they both passed away. The example of love, strength, and faith in change they brought to Paxton reverberates throughout the town even to this day. The time of Regina and Barbara's love was set in 1956, a time when normalcy was important, but constricting. The bench in which Regina and Barbara sat on during the day of their one-year anniversary now bears their names and this inscription:

Love unlocks doors and makes all things possible. May each person find love without meeting persecution for feeling. Envision a time when nothing but the present matters and, "It's all about letting go."



Heidi Hughes **Untitled**

The Office

Elena Di Marco

They walk in together, no differently than any other morning. With his briefcase in hand, he flips on the light. He walks into one of the conference rooms and makes sure the light has been turned on in there. The main conference room before him is the most important. That's where all the negotiating and signing of important things gets done. She walks to her desk, takes out her Mont Blanc and heads over to the answering machine. He walks into his office, places his briefcase on his desk and sits in his big office chair with wheels, then leans back.

"Did Mr. Becker leave a message about Friday's closing?" he asks.

"I'm not done with all the messages," she replies.

After she finishes with the last message, she turns her computer and typewriter on. One is used to organize everything in the office, the other is devoted to typing the messages and forms.

"Where's the file on McKinley and Finn?" he asks her.

"Right here," she replies. She walks into his office and throws it on his desk. He blows her a sarcastic kiss. "I want to try to get out of the office a little early today. Lord & Taylor is having a sale."

There is no answer from him. He knows no matter what he says she will go anyway. In the other room, he talks into a tape recorder that she will listen to through headphones and type his every word. The first phone call of the day comes in. She answers it.

While on the phone, the other line rings. He lets it ring a few times, but soon realizes that she doesn't plan on answering it. Her phone call must be important. Then he picks up the other line. On the other end, some man is speaking Italian. He puts the man on hold.

"I can't talk to him. He's speaking Italian. You handle it," he yells from his desk. When she is done on the phone, he asks her who was so important on the other end that she couldn't answer the phone. She told him it was her brother and he was fighting with his wife again. He proceeds with his dictating and she begins to return the messages from the night before.

In any other office, she would have been fired, which would leave him lost in his own practice. But, not there. If he ever fired her, she would divorce him and he would then be forced to pay a secretary who probably wouldn't be bilingual or cook him dinner after a hard day at work.



Portrait Sarah Worthington



Study of a Sleeping Body Samneang Sin

A Night's Project

Ruth Santiago

I see now that I am just a project
An assignment that you eye with interest
Like a case study in one of your books
A new discovery to uncover
Like an artist's sketch unfinished, unsure
You search my curves with lustful urgency
Forbidden desire, thirst quenching fruit
You taste, you prod, you probe, nibble and feast
But only in dreams hidden by a band
A project to hide behind wedding bells
Your subject, your toy, to hide from your king
Haunted forever, a project undone
No longer a passing fascination
All you ever hoped for, a masterpiece

Changes

Jennifer Davidson

I watch out the window everyday
The world continues the same while the seasons change
Leaves turn bright hues of yellow, orange, and red
As days go by the colors fade and the world starts to die
The air becomes crisp with a clean scent of rains to come
Hurricane winds vibrate through the trees, the rains turn to ice
Hell begins here on earth as quickly as it ends
The trees begin their slow thaw and fresh growth
The air warms and the winds calm to a breeze
Buds and blossoms return in vibrant greens
Flowers push up inch by inch towards the sun
The world slows to feel the warmth on its skin
Take a deep breath and let the feeling prevail
Both new life and fresh love bringing comforts of spring.

The Sparkler Speaks

Christina Simpson

And when my crystal turns to the light
He shows me this pungent hue of gold
The horizon pink, the breath of the dawn
Sculpts the belly of my prism. I lie
In this mattress of dry spit and silk leaves
I watch this pendulum murmer me
He pangs my eyes with the intensity
of its touch. His butterfly voice tells me:
"I've seen the days undress yet not move on.
I've seen the pumpkin bride, her veil of clouds.
She woos to me with sweet talk from the birds
But I refuse her offers when she breathes.
So she faints and revives herself so pale
and stains her veil with tears that pierce my eyes."



Just Shut-up and Pass the Pie Jessica Ann Daddino



I Feel You

Jenell Wilkie

Piercing my insides
Now my insides are crying
'Cause my insides are dying
Can't trace the catalyst
Now what kind of habit is this?
I thought that the pain sprang
From old scars, from old wounds
But one glance into the glass
Showed the dagger connected to you
I thought I was over this
Thought I was closer to utter bliss
But truths reveal the lies
That lie beneath your smiles.
It seemed that you were shallow,
But now I see they extend for miles.
One step further from Victory
Two steps closer to Heresy
Three times you Pierced the side of me.
Now what form or fashion is this
Your deep words are totally passionless
You came at me sideways
Now I'm laying down sideways
Can't stand the burn 'tween my shoulder blades
Still my scars are my lessons learned
So I wear them proud as my wisdom earned
One step further from Victory
Two steps closer to Heresy
Three times you Pierced the side of me.
It's all part of my Legacy
So, I'll never be gone
You'll always remember Me.





Revealed in Time Emily Williams

Seashell

Keisha Smith

The waves rushed up fast, slapped sand and brought a seashell
Kept the distance of the journey unknown, and gave the destination to my feet
Then retreated and left me there, standing alone at the horizon's door
Looking down at what was left of a curled and water beaten armor
Half buried under pale white sand and fragile as a single sheet of paper
It held on to its purpose and sat stationary as a rock

The mention of its purpose brought to mind nothing but a rock
Although in reality delicacy is traditional of a seashell
Some of the most stunning have textures as thin as a single sheet of paper
It looked alone and empty covered with this pure white sand and lying at my feet
Once strong and occupied, it was now just an isolated and pierced armor
It kept me company as I stood still at the face of horizon's door

So there I stood staring and engaged at the height of the horizon's door
Similar to this newfound shell I remained as motionless as a rock
Feeling close and somehow related in my own isolated and pierced armor
I shed a single tear standing there, half buried with this exceptional seashell
In a moment of tranquility the waves rushed at and past my feet
Then retreated, leaving me exceedingly frail as a solitary leaf of paper

Lifted by the breeze, the cover page of an old and abandoned newspaper
It flew over my head and through the frame of the horizon's open door
I refocused my attention to the precious treasure that noiselessly lay at my feet

Still as loosely planted in the sand and lifeless as a dry rock
It became a desire to possess this forgotten and extraordinary seashell
It was small and it was the right size for my heart's fitting of armor

To cover scars and bruises that healed naturally and yet in need of armor
My skin once strong is now as weak and easily torn as a single page of any paper
And all of this simply appeared just as the ocean waves brought forth this lone seashell
At the moment I was standing in front of and facing the horizon's open door
In awe and bewilderment whilst freely frozen as an Earth dwelling rock
With sands of time pushed by the tide back forth and around my feet

Baptized and consecrated it lay by my half buried and obliged feet
It chose me and I needed a strong and reliable choice for an armor
I reached down and felt its lifeless remains; it was as hard as a rock
Its grooves were distinct and it was more than delicate as a piece of paper
We found each other at the opening of the dusky horizon's door
I looked much deeper at the inner facing of this peculiar seashell

And saw myself as a rock planted on my own two feet
A chance encounter with a seashell washed up as stainless armor
Void as a single piece of any paper stirring me to enter the horizon's welcoming door.

Rainbow

Surena Simpson

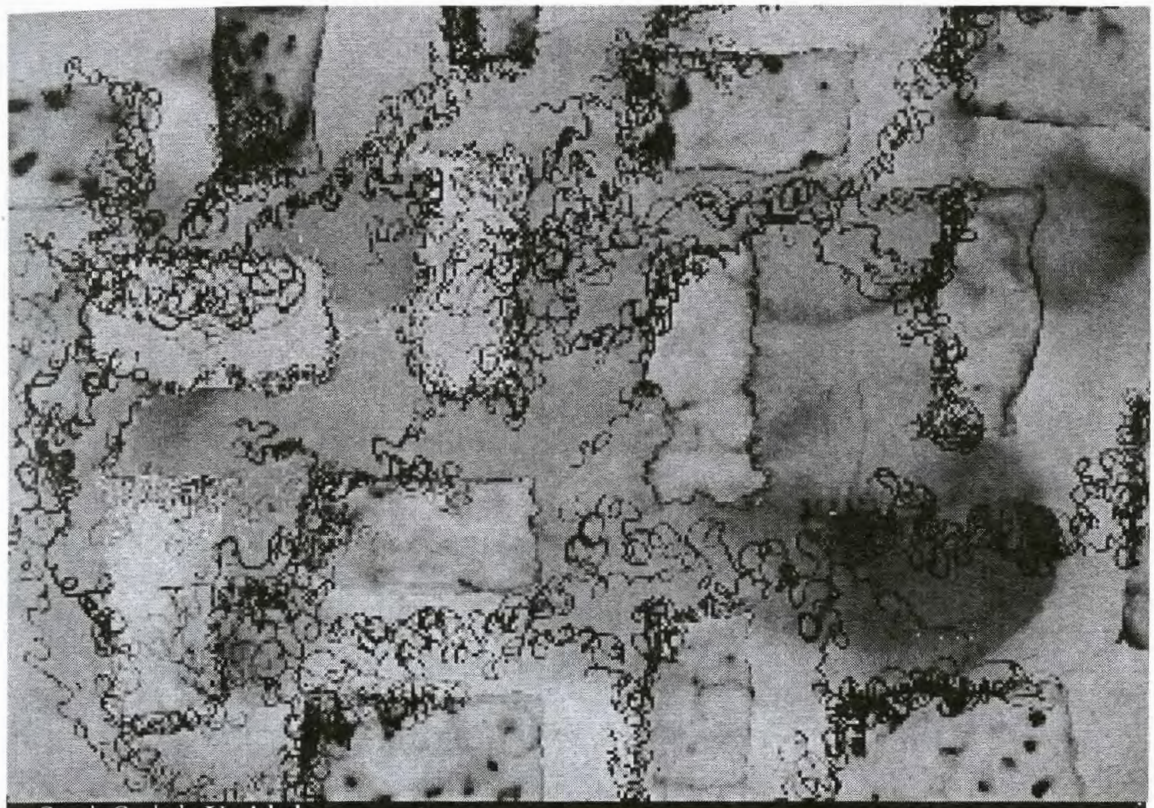
You were my sunny days
You were my cool breeze on that
Blazing hot day
You were my cold to my hot
Why did you have to change?

You started slow...
A little rain here and a little rain there
But you still remain to shine
And then suddenly a storm begins to brew

The shelter I thought would never fall
Fell
Nothing was left standing
But the rays of the sun tried to shine
This was the longest storm ever
It lasted longer than I could handle

Some how some way
I had the strength to build a little house
For myself
Then the sun begins to shine
And the rainbow appears
All colorful and bright
Sparkling with the suns radiance
I must start anew with the love in my heart

My rainbow My strength Myself



Sarah Grabek **Untitled**

Weather Talks

Carrie Margolis

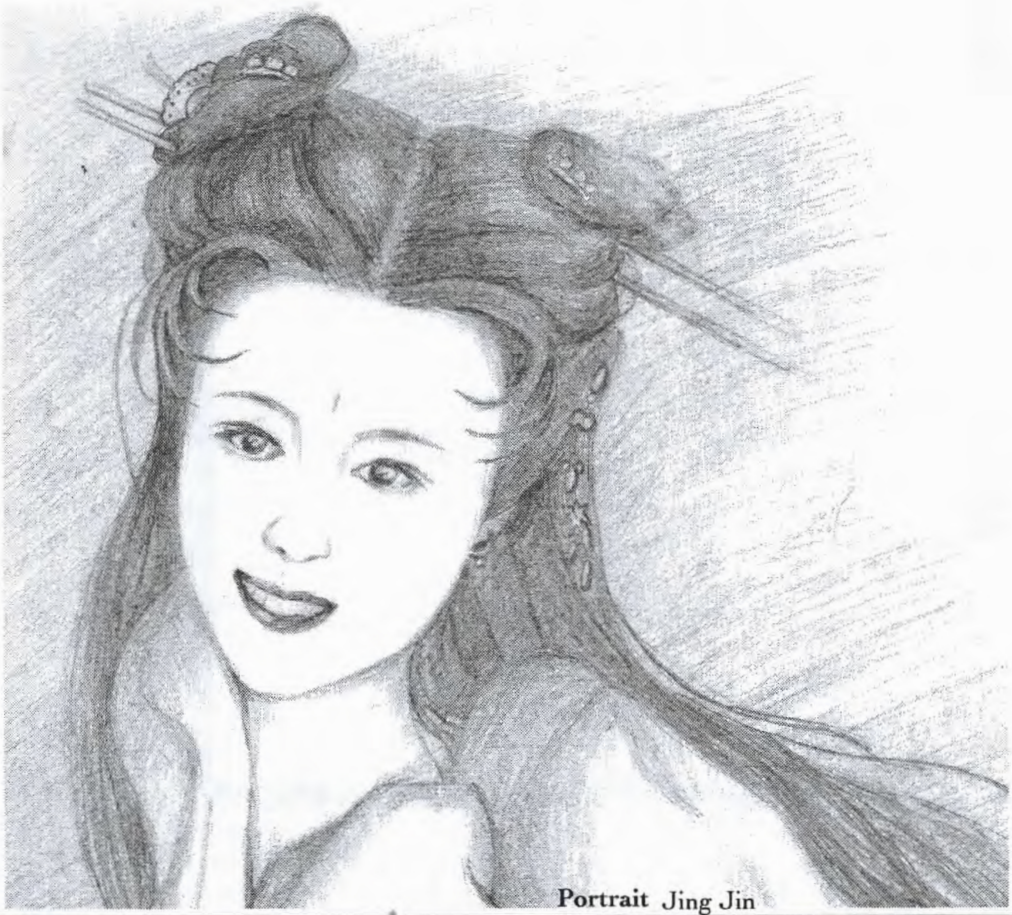
All of the rain plagued the great northwest valley that week
Heavy fog remained as a blanket shadowing out the light
The doublewide trailer felt damp from the moisture it contained
There was no seeing where the mountains reach the sky from the living room window
She turned to me and told me to
quit my complaining
"That god was just givin the earth a good washin"
Her thick voice she inherited from Montana continued to rumble along with the dark
gray sky
I lost consciousness again
Into the rhythm of the rain pounding against the clinky tin roof
The same rhythm I heard all that week

Age of Burgundy

Christina Simpson

The fire alarm
Your flowers by the window
grasping the loss of sunlight and shimmer of green vivacity
Your car in the midst of faded browns
Drained
I miss you
The parking signs
Ladybug Lanterns
Shaken by switchblade winds
That dull roof hiding behind the desiccate branches
Dying together
You stole from me
The taillights of the Ford
Reflective of sunburst and the energy of together
"No Parking" sign so leeched
so lean, so pale
I miss you
Stop signs
Not the first
Blaring this intensity of you
A&P behind the rust of winter
Leaving neat trails of a tame orange and mustard
Brick facial mask of the vinyl home
Its ash, the age of burgundy decimated
The handicap rails
Another car
Another stop sign
And next to it... Do Not Enter
You're here with me
Hearts in the window of an insipid Mama dwelling
Misshapen and absolute
Where are you?
And then this door
The scarlet orifice to a strange land
A stranger
Do Not Enter
NY Yankees suction scorched onto a window

My last stop sign
Mary Janes – Death by tied shoelaces and
telephone wire
Patriotic flags battered by the wind
I will wait for you to return to me



Portrait Jing Jin

[I Got Dressed This Morning]

Heidi Parillo

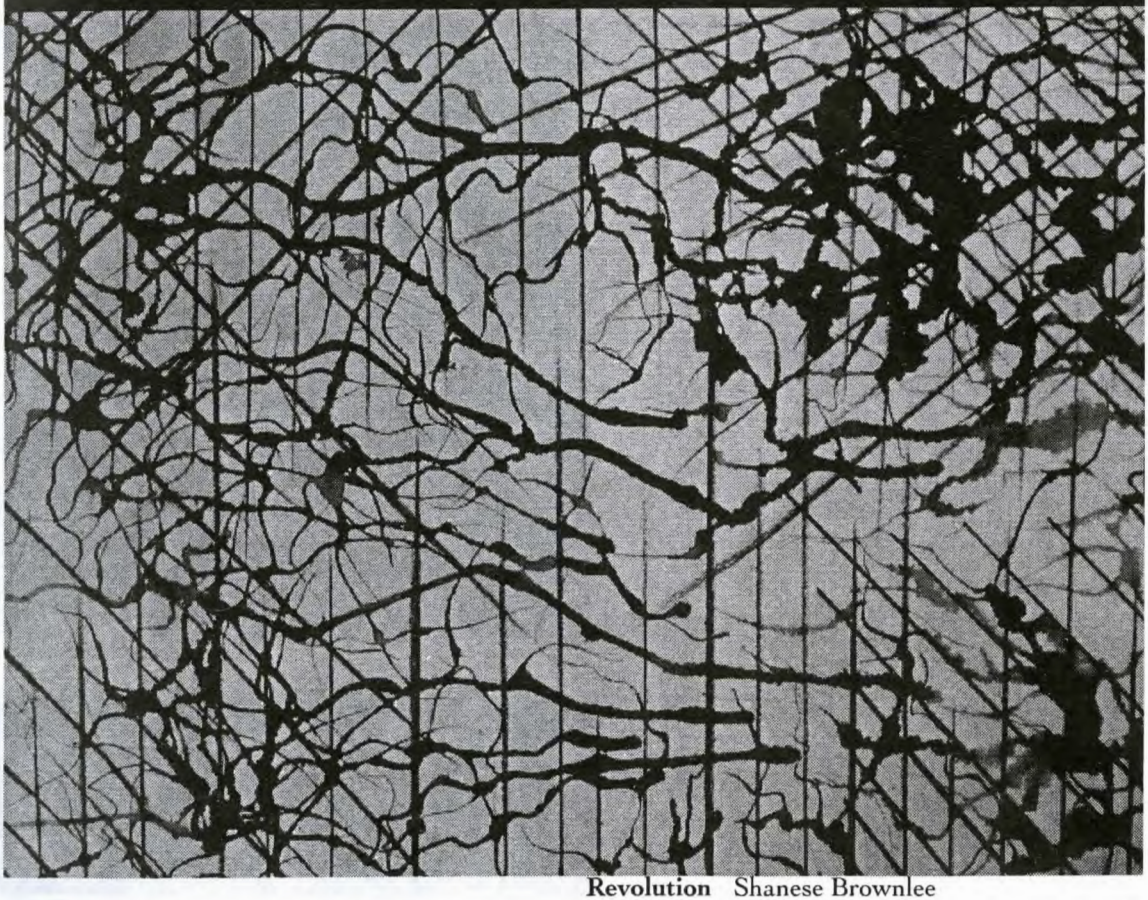
I got dressed this morning...
I slipped into my shoes...
Splashed on the scent of devotion...
Then placed the weight of your world on my shoulders.
I made my way down the hall.
My smile like the wallpaper,
Is a permanent fixture in this house.
I kept my word,
Made my promises,
And posed with divine posture.
Then with white gloves in hand,
I washed away the stains of your lies.
Stopping for a moment,
I wondered just when the sweet became so sour...

But as the clock started up again...
Time could not wait for me.
With my attention to detail,
I played every last part.
Graceful, tasteful, smooth...exquisite.
Then without a wrinkle to my suit,
I laid back into bed...
...and closed my eyes to all things I wish not to see

Mother Earth

Sarah Grabek

Mother earth is sad, sad and upset
She sees the people living on her
Sees them hurting one another
Why she wonders, why war
She realizes as the days go on
That the people of the earth don't know
They themselves are unsure
Unsure of why we are doing the things we are doing
One thing mother earth knows for sure
She wishes she weren't Mother Earth anymore



Revolution Shanese Brownlee

Seashells

Heidi Parillo

Scattered there on the sandy shore
Holding steadfast in their place
Lie the casualties of war.

Pulled out from the ocean floor
Delivered to its watery base
Scattered there on the sandy shore.

From the spraying crash and roar
Waiting silent... about face.
Lie the casualties of war.

Cracked and split, their fate unsure,
This beautiful and broken race
Scattered there on the sandy shore.

Tantalized by the briny lure,
Swept back within the current's pace
Lie the casualties of war.

Replenished form and smooth contour
Polished by the tides good grace
Scattered there on the sandy shore
Lie the casualties of war.





Untitled Heidi Hughes

The Wait

Kathryn M. Tyranski

I enter the place
Where I am to meet you
I check the time
Five minutes early
You'll be here any minute
I remain standing in anticipation
Feeling nervous, more excited

I sit
You haven't come yet
I stare at the architecture
The walls, ceiling, floor
Just to be occupied
I reach for my cell phone to call you
I forgot it at home

I pace
I worry now
It's been two hours, I'm still waiting
Where are you?
This isn't like you
I keep staring at the door
And my body tenses as each newcomer enters
Only to find it isn't you

I wait
I've waited
I'll keep waiting
You are worth the wait
Five hours pass
I pick up my coat
And leave

I find you waiting
Outside the door

I am a first person singular

Omega Dale

I am a first person singular
But I wish I was a third person plural.
I could watch you front and back;
And could say –
No –
They did it.
I am wearing myself as a dress.
Mother's earrings... friend's Chanel...
OH...!
To be a third person plural...
Never have to agree – Yet be ambiguous with a cause...
Decide by plurality – Be Angry
And say I was unjust.
And have reason yet for doing what I had done.
Send one of me home,
When I was tedious, or hopelessly immature
And,
No one would care.
They'd say
Oh
She's a They

The peaceful garden of faded greens and blues

Richelle Fiore

The peaceful garden of faded greens and blues,
of lilac water lilies and white bridges is where
my head begins. The rest, my body, remains
buried under the confectionery azul.
Sometimes, I wish it is the sky
dropping to greet me,
but hallucinations are often fruitless.

My eyes open to absence, or is it presence?
I always confuse the nature of it—
beige, only beige.
Closing my eyes and wishing for a dazzling kaleidoscope of primaries,
a palette chosen for Fengshui,
what exists is just absence—
those neutral tones.

Worn yellow tiles and freshly cloaked white walls
add a splash of warmth,
and there,
the peach womb of steaming black yearns for mocha transformations.
Sipping, I don't think I would like
to be forever trapped inside
the maze they make me call
home.

Can a neutral tone offer comfort
I wonder, returning to the
horizon of blue
as the cream of my day
has been wasted.

Broken Glass

Karen Baddeley

It happened
In silent
Slow-motion
Thick and heavy and dreamlike
Metal crunching
And smashing
The broken glass
S c a t t e r e d
Across the street
Illuminated and glittering
Like Christmas Lights
By the Harvest Moon
And if my screams
Were loud enough
They would bring you back
To life

The Norm

Kathryn M. Tyranski

I am misunderstood
I am misunderstood
I am missed

I am the poor pregnant white girl
I am the black successful businesswoman
I am the white Jewish man
I am the tormented Muslim boy

I am all of these things and more
I am you and you and you…
The norm is a thing of the past
WASPS are disliked
The other is celebrated

Snap back into reality
None of it is true
I am me and you are you
And nothing has changed
Except the time

Necessary Blindness for Sight

Keisha Smith

I shall not look at you, (I shan't)
And voluntarily subject my own eyes
To the likes of your physicality
Opening my own windows to the
Hidden and scheming depths of your character
Allowing sure passage to my soul



Lacie Elizabeth Lasek

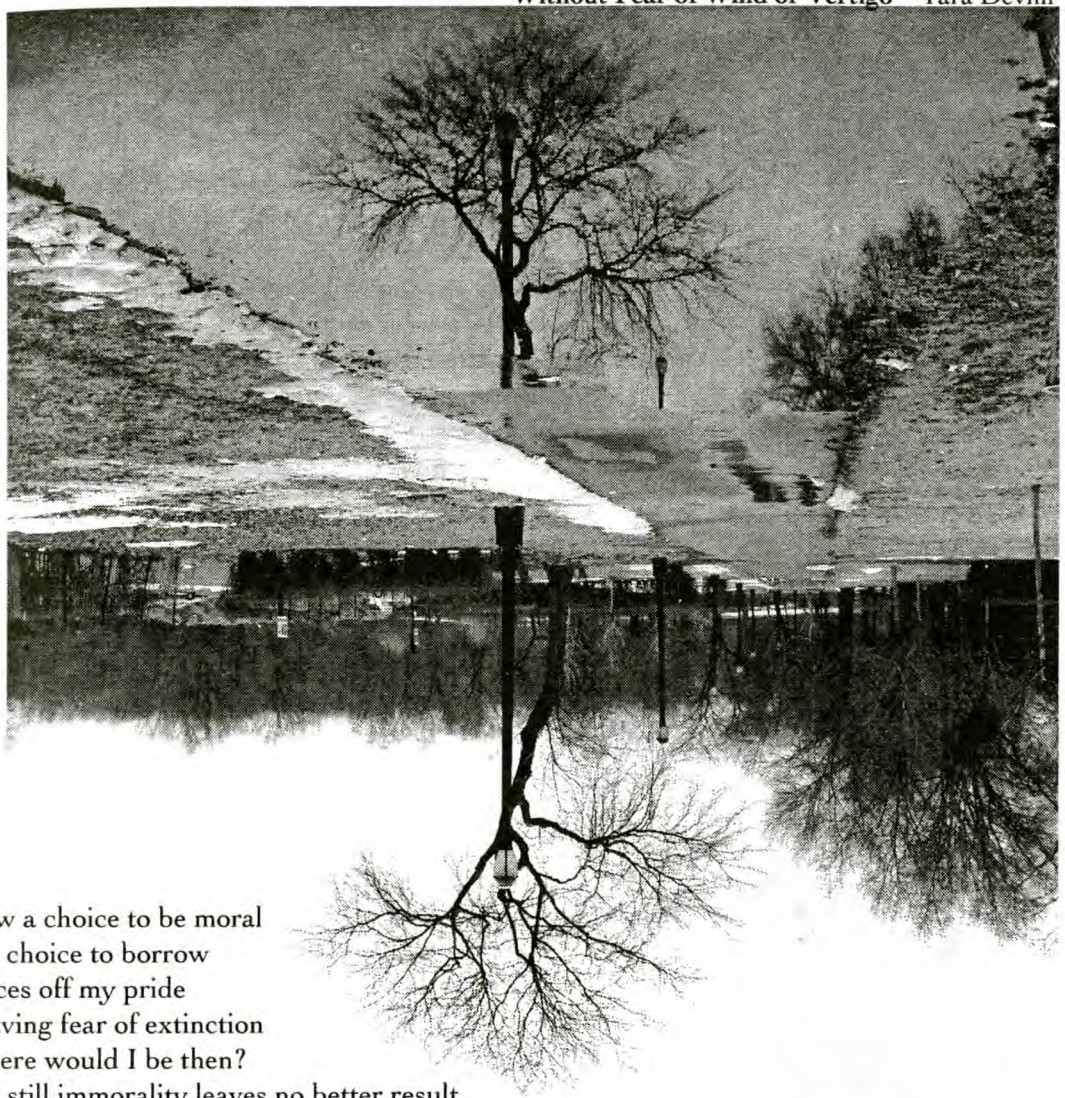
I cannot look at you, (I can't)
Or your beauty, for fear that
It should be branded pleasurably in my memory
And the fleshy parts of my spirit
Where no one can see or feel, except myself
For I am not strong enough to resist so,
I will not look at you, (I won't)
In order to bypass your gentle wickedness
The slyness of the seduction in your smile
And certain surrender to the foresting greenness in your eyes
Tearing my comfort into dependent pieces
And leaving me, for sure, worse off
I should not look at you, (I shouldn't)
But helpless in my demise
All is NOT fair in lust and war
(For sure someone will have to lose)
I fight with my imagination which provokes images of you
Permitting it to seep through the darkness like light
I do not look at you, (I don't)
The fact of the matter is that I have...once
Really well, and I fail as I try to forget what I saw
Capturing and enslaving me within soft walls of desire
I sit with my hands at bay, motionless for lack of reason
But NOT purpose, for deep and alone in my blindness
I see it necessary to free myself.

Dawn

Jenell Wilkie

I have died spiritually
Now I lay waiting for resurrection
Demons eat away internally
Don't think I'll pass my next inspection
Put my heart to the test daily
So, I get no rest, barely
As much as you think
My skin looks soft and sweet
But my house stinks
I'm lost within myself
On a mission to find my wealth,
Which is above me
So, still I question why I love Thee
Pain within me
Rapidly beating on my heart
Rapidly pacing round my soul
Rapidly eating away at my innocence
Soon all that will be left is my sinfulness

That third day seems so far away... now
But when I stand by His side I'll see the rights, wrongs, and how's
I follow the path to my Master
From a distance
Facing much resistance
Entities against me
Leave emptiness within me
Staring me falsely
As I allow them to, cost me
My sanity
Invade my thoughts
And cause acts of vanity
Paper chase causing immorality



Now a choice to be moral
Is a choice to borrow
Pieces off my pride
Leaving fear of extinction
Where would I be then?
But still immorality leaves no better result
Me telling everyone else it's their fault
Walking around... *with this big chip on my shoulder*
Super woman... *trying to lift the weight of this boulder*
Ice age extinguishing my fires
Costing me desires
So what's next?

Spirit, Sanity, and Pride all gone
So I lay and I wait
For the Eternal Dawn.



Self Transformation Alana Ruptak

Invisible Monsters

Rebecca Mui

The shot went off
Scattering her face over the dashboard
Her blood boldly vibrant against the Toyota's gray

But that was after

She strutted down the runway
Her twenty pounds of sequence
Reflecting beads of light on the faces
Of so many ogling audience members

Her hair was half a foot high
Cemented in hairspray
With the balls of her feet
Perpendicular to her heels
She couldn't breathe
Smile
FLASH.

She could see the exit
But she couldn't escape them
They followed her home
While she shopped
While she drove

They let her out of parking tickets
Paid her half of the bill
Bought her drinks
These people. This society
They saw her as a poster
Maybe a blow up doll
But nothing more

She yearned for the freedom
Of the crippled
The honor of the physically handicapped
The reassurance of her validity
Regardless of appearance
The kind of attention society could never grant a model
The explosion of her comfort zone
The hunchbacks of this world need no mirrors
No one expects them to get implants
No one would even notice if they did
And this was her goal;
To hide from them

It's not enough to want change
And wait for it to come to you.
You have to take chances
Take the first shot
Take only one shot
But aim it at your face
That pearly smile
That body part that has remained
So recognizable

And destroy it
But do not destroy yourself
This is the fastest, foolproof way
Preteens have piercings
And tattoos have been done
The wrinkles of aging
Are a lifetime away

So with her heart racing
But her mind completely clear
She held the gun firmly at arm length
She flashed her perfect smile
One last time
She would have her new beginning



Call Waiting

Richelle Fiore

The stomach of Michael Crayon leaped into his throat when he stared across the sea of blank faces. He never imagined the day he would be on the other side of the desk. He had been a teaching assistant for only seven weeks, and only those seven weeks and a Bachelor's degree separated him from them. The four stout legs of flaking paint and an imitation wood surface did not offer enough protection against them—eighteen year olds. When he began writing his thesis last year, he inexplicably developed a hatred for the freshmen that lived on the floor above him. Perhaps it wasn't so inexplicable, one of them was constantly having frisky, ear-numbing sex. He never discovered who his tormenters actually were. Stoned and victorious was how he felt when he collected his diploma before heading out to the desolate terrain of Storrs, CT and a Ph.D. program.

He despised the survey class before him even more than his required undergraduate economics course, where despite diligent tutoring from his at-the-time girlfriend Jenna, Michael only received a C-. Their demeanor was morose, regardless of what was being taught. Milton was sexist for placing all the blame on Eve, Pope was a fiend obsessed with boring wordplay, and the Wordsworth lecture was simply a disaster. When Krissi in the fifth row, one of the few people that he bothered to retain the name of due to the ridiculous spelling, expressed her complete boredom at the subject matter of the Intimations Ode, he just about threw the *Norton Anthology* at her head.

The rows parted to reveal her dark head. He didn't really know her name, and each class he imagined a new one for her. Penelope. Dido. Clarissa. Emily. Charlotte. Justine. Her name probably really was Karen or Sarah or Meghan, but the ones he imagined better suited her. Drowning in her hazel eyes would be far more pleasant then attempting to mount his expedition through Mont Blanc. What's the point? They would hate it and if he got into the lecture, he would lose track of his fantasies of her.

"Shelley composed this poem after trekking though the Alps with Lord Bryon--"

The sounds of the Mexican hat dance interrupted him like an unexpected question. Make that an incomprehensible question expressed through flailing limbs. What infuriated Michael even more than the interruption was the fact that the student answered the phone, then made plans to meet 'Britney for coffee at Starbucks once class was over.' Was there any point to standing up there? He looked at the phone guy incredulously as he shut his flip-phone and shoved it back in his pocket. There was no apology, any acknowledgement of any kind. Who needs Romantic poetry anyways?

"Shelley composed this poem after trekking though the Alps with Lord Bryon," he began again, writing the date of its composition on the board. Michael imagined himself standing before the white mountain with its never materializing peak. Hadn't everything been an exercise in futility after all?

His teaching assignment had been disastrous, and it was only half over. There were still seven weeks left in the semester. He heard his voice echoing in the lecture hall as

he read the lines of the poem aloud. He was wondering if it was seducing Lucy, as he christened her only a second before. His voice was rough but lilting as Shelley's words slid across his tongue. God, it must be so alluring.

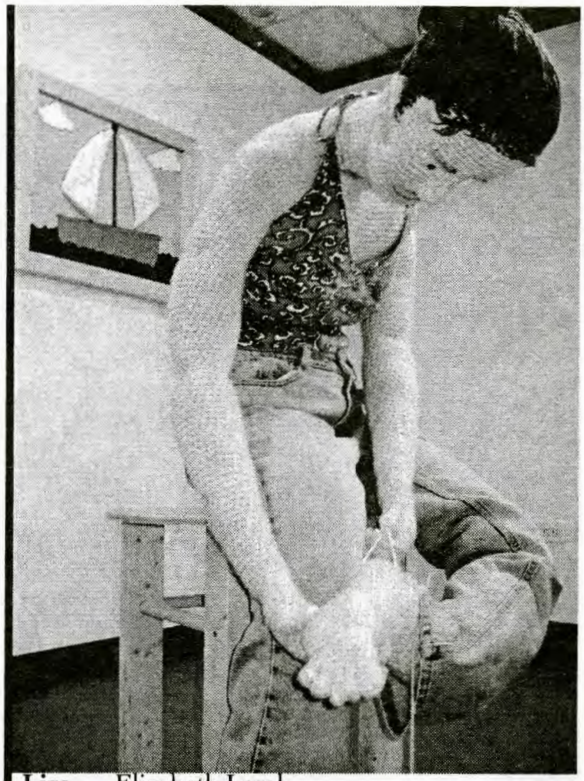
This time, it was the William Tell Overture that interrupted his recitation. The dilapidated building barely had a functioning heating system, but excellent cell service it seemed. Who was going to be next? Michael decided to ignore the distraction and kept reading.

" '*Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal*
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understand
By all, but which the wise and great and good
Interpret, or make felt or deeply feel.' What do you think about that stanza?"

Michael imagined a pin dropping and reverberating to the cows grazing outside of campus. There was absolutely no response.

When he was a student and this occurred, his advisor would scream and rant at the class, demanding for any comment that was halfway competent. The poetry professor would interrogate the reasons causing the silence for the rest of the hour. Another simply would slam the book shut and storm out of the classroom. These were not the best models of classroom behavior, but Michael was frustrated. He wanted to ask if they had read the poem or were even listening to him. But, he really was afraid of the response. Nope. *We're killing time and earning credits.* Was that not the purpose of a Gen. Ed requirement?

He didn't remember his mouth hanging open as he stared out at them in disbelief. The only thing he would remember was the ringing of



Liza Elizabeth Lasek

his own cell phone and looking at the unrecognized number. So aggravated and spiteful to them, he answered it.

"Hello?"

"Hi, my name is Gabrielle and I sit in the eighth row." It was his beloved, waiving a favor for him. "Can we talk about the poem?" She offered a limp wave before pointing to something at the top of a piece of paper he couldn't read. It must be the syllabus with his cell number in the right corner.

"I think it's an interesting use of the blank. Shelley seems to suggest the instability of language itself." She paused only for a split-second, enough time to exhale. "And, I like the way you're reading the poem."

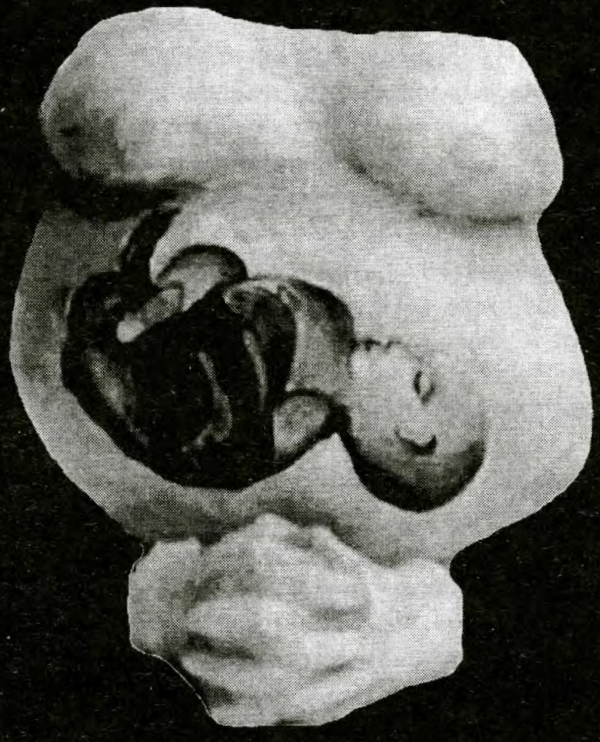
Trapped

Tiara L. Simmons

In a different world, in a different place
Got a different body, different face
No exit. No common ground
I'm trapped in my own world. Trapped all around
Got this thing on my right. That mess in the back
Blocked by chaos in front and confusion to my side

Trapped, and held down by this hand of that man
Inescapable, undetectable till it's too late
Too many thoughts, too many thoughts, too heavy
I can't move, yo I'm trapped
Blinded by the brightness of the blackness
Surrounded by the darkness of the shadows

It gets worse, I can't get out
of love with you, it's sad
You've got me captured in your corner
And I struggle but the more I try,
The more I fail. Don't struggle. Don't struggle.
It only gets worse.



Fear of Pregnancy (detail) Beatrice Lujwangana

Grown

Chantal May

You are growing inside of me
Every time I go to class I can feel you
I'm happy you are coming
Just undercover happy
What would my mother think
What is everyone in school thinking
When I walk down the hall
"Damn, she getting big," they whisper
Every time I am in the hallways
I pretend I don't notice
Just go to class
Friends question whether or not I should have you
"You don't even know the daddy," they say
So, is my only comeback
Yeah it's my fault
Yeah I'm immature thinking my actions make me grown
Grown is knowing right from wrong
Grown is knowing how to protect myself from getting pregnant
Grown is knowing the smart thing to do
Let us hope
Hope I have enough smarts for the both of us
But if I was grown I would not have to hope I would just KNOW

What Is Sadder Than a Train in the Rain?

Group poem by the Creative Writing Poetry workshop in response to a question posed by Pablo Neruda and in celebration of his Centenial.

Once when I was very little
under a big wet catalpa tree
no doors opened

nothing was like the night

The weathered brown petal plunges from the bloom
Is it a Kamikaze mission if you're already
dead?

What is sadder than a train in the rain? Overbearing shadows that provide and feed our hesitation, nourishing it not to break free.

She went back to what she knew (my heart)
Though she really knew nothing at all (guilt)
Only the sharp edges of emptiness and the dull reality of life (lost love)

A lone car in the fog
A single cracker in an empty box
A child's swingset with no one to swing
All these things sadder than that train could ever be
A child's empty stomach from hunger
A mother's loss of her baby
The mourning of a parent
The breakup of a first love
The death of an innocent
The dark, cloudy days of winter

What is sadder than a train in the rain?: A meandering soul in search of a lost path
which she refuses to seek out. Complete isolation from yourself, never mind
the world (driven by desire/Blinded by...
Being in a dark tunnel alone without even a light
Running from a tiger to avoid being dinner
To be homeless in the winter...

The tracks are slick w/the wetness of the sun
and yet they desire the dark dew of his labour

An old white house sagging in the grey part of town

I still hear the tapping
Of life in revision
Revisions in the mind
Of the day before

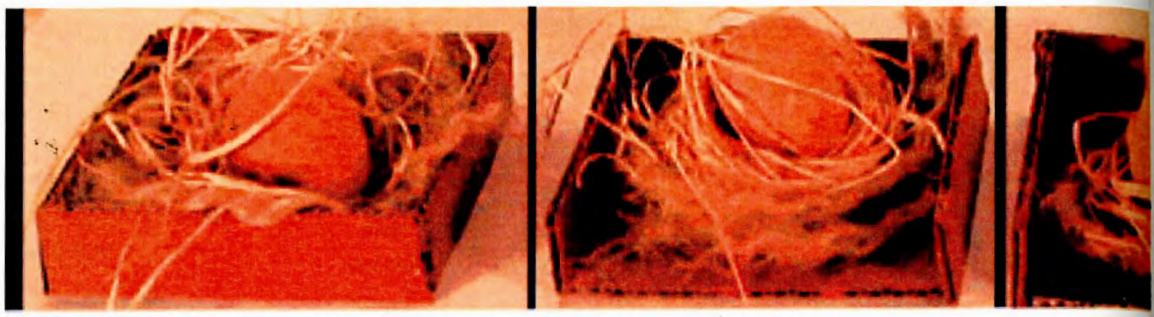
If there was not a train in sight
And the rain still fell
evenly
upon the rusty tracks it would be sadder
Wet and unused would lay the tracks
no

engine sound
no
smoke

An empty heart
No sense of reality

What is sadder than a train in the rain

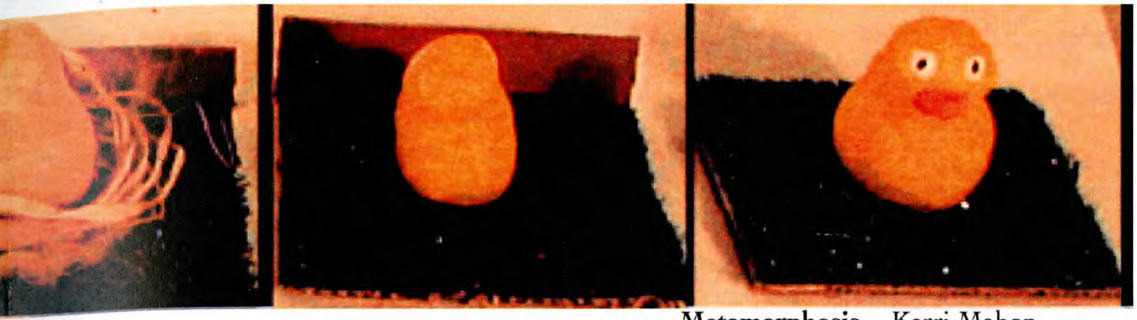
is a train that does not reach its destination



Paradise

Renee Simpson

The sensuous flower whose qualities melt my senses:
Kissing my eyes with its vibrant colors,
Tall like the sun's rays coming from the sky,
Scent that takes over my nose,
Touch as delicate as your first embrace...
No clouds to be seen
Just birds to be heard,
In the trees that blossom
And palms that blow in the breeze,
Sway back and forth easily...
Soft white sands at my feet,
While with my toes the gentle waters play...
Join me in a vision
Of my island fantasy....



Metamorphosis Kerri Mahon

Off Course

Carrie Margolis

The sun must have changed its mind today
It set in the east
Lingering there as if nothing had
Changed
I was thinking what the hell
Does the sun think it's doing!
I began walking towards the heat
Looking for the sea
I waited alone in drowsiness
Along the coastline for the
Revelation
The sun eventually moved back
Across the sky going down
In the west
I left there in confusion
Knowing I would fully forget the
Day the sun set in the east.

Epiphany

Sophilia Le Blanc

"'Hello, Auto Trim Design, this is Lisa, how may I help you?' 'Yes, hello Lisa. You sound like such a pretty young lady.' And then he totally lost me so I stopped listening."

"No you didn't."

"I swear I have ADD or something. So then I was like I'm sorry sir, but I really can't understand you. I'm a little out of it so, umm, could you just call and leave him a message or something."

"That is so crazy."

"I know it's really stupid but listen there's more. So I guess he was like talking for a really long time cause while he was talking I started day-dreaming, right. I was just thinking and thinking. And it happened."

"Just sitting there in the office by yourself?"

"Yes! I had a Tiffany or a symphony. Whatever it's called. You know a really big thought that changes the world."

"Ohhhhhhhh I know what you're talking about."

"So, I'm playing solitaire and thinking about what dress I'm going to wear on graduation when I give my speech cause I'm so gonna be Salutatorian. So... my first thought was 'I can just wear the turquoise one with the straps if its warm or that one I got in Soho'..."

"Oh my god too stinkin' cute with the silver belt and the black Pearla Maung shoes you wore to Betty's party..."

"Oh my god I didn't even think of those shoes. Yeah... but anyway then I was like I have to give a speech!"

"So..."

"Well, I was trying to think of something really cool. I didn't want it to be lame like last year. Remember that Kaitlyn girl: 'What if the Hokey Pokey *is* what it's all about?'"

"I know I was like, What if this *is* the wackest speech I've ever heard?"

"Yeah, I know and what was up with her hair? So then I tried to think of cool lines in movies. But I can't go up there and be like 'Love can't always be perfect. Love is just love'"

"You know I thought *Gigli* was an awesome movie too."

"I know. It totally was. But listen to what I thought. Okay so I got some of it from Dr. Phil's *Life Strategies* book but it's still kinda cool. Ready? 'So it's totally obvious that in

high school we are separated into groups. There are honors students and slackers, scrubs and beautiful people, the cool and the uncool. I'm not saying this to be mean, it's just the way high school is. But maybe the world would be a better place if there weren't all these separations and labels. Maybe it's not really important that my friends and I wear shoes more expensive than most of your wardrobes or that there are people here who can solve a calculus problem faster than some of you can write your own name. Because after high school that all goes away and people don't know what group you used belong to and life becomes less about what clique you were in and more about what type of person you are inside. So as I prepare to enter college and eventually the "real world" my goal is to learn to like and respect people for more than the label they had in high school. And hopefully each of you will make that your goal too. Then it won't matter what names people called you in the hallway or who you hung out with after school. All that will matter is "who you are" and if you make the effort, it will be obvious that "who you are" is a better person..... What?"

"Wouldn't it be *what* you are, is a better person?"

"Yeah whatever. So what did you think?"

"Well Lisa.... That speech kinda ...like... sucks. I mean, I just really don't think anyone will get it."

"Crap! I know. It sounded way better in my head. Okay maybe I'll just be like: "I've been dreaming about this since I was a little girl. And you know sometimes its just destiny for people to do what they do. Don't be scared. Its just graduation."

"Oh my God, you *so* have to say that at the end of your speech. That is awesome."

"Yeah I'm thinking I can't go wrong with a Justin Timberlake quote. So what do you want to eat?"

"I'm just gonna get a salad... you?"

"*Epiphany!!*"

"Mmmm. That sounds tasty. Does that have carbs?"

"No, that's the word: *epiphany.*"

"Oh."

" Yeah. But anyway... I think I'm going to get a salad too."

Pretty Pink Cloth

Jenell Wilkie

Some dream of picnics surrounded by marigolds
On a sunny afternoon
Some dream of ski diving off Mount Everest
When their life is in bloom
Some dream...some dream...some dream
Of freedom from pain
Freedom from hate
Freedom from love
I lost my freedom when I fell in love
Became impregnated with ideals
And birthed inhibitions
Now soaked in them I creep around
Murmuring tears of lost years
Looking for love in lust
Being mean trying to hate
Looking for joy within my pain
With a smile on my face
I wrapped my inhibitions in pretty pink cloth
And named it envy, pain, hate, lust, and
Love guides me further into darkness
Lust finds me wandering at twilight
Envy posts at every corner
And hate and pain cut to the very core
Now exposed to the
Pounding rain
The blistering cold
And boiling sun
My pretty pink cloth follows me wherever I go
And I dream that it was Blue.

Question Mark

Massiel Ortiz

Do you listen?
Do you care?
I'll take a minute to ask myself
Am I really here?
Can you feel this?
Can you see that?
Are you imagining us?
Together, as planned

You don't need me, yet I can help
I'm pleading for another chance to love you
I've learned to do it so well
Who better then I?

Don't I satisfy you?
Your anxiety to feel "complete"
On every level....
Will you allow me to walk with you along the way?
Or am I to wait, again?
Will you risk this opportunity also?
Can we risk it together?
Gliding through this earth
Despite the options that rest behind our future doors

Maryann

Karen Baddeley

You lost yourself before anyone could find you
Under a layer of makeup and bravado
You hid yourself so cunningly

Jaded adolescent that you were
You probably believed yourself invincible
Your tough veneer held together so delicately

Your death undignified, wrapped in blankets and chains
Plunged into the Housatonic like you were nothing
Like you never happened

I wonder if you knew you were going to die that day
At what point did it hit you that you weren't going home?
That your cries to your mother would go unanswered?

Your life was a frenzy of sex and violence and lies
Slowly strangled in a spiral of chaos
Thirteen years and your story ends

Transparent

Janeith Wright

Existing to fulfill many purposes
Sustaining, deadly, or flowing peacefully.
Having a false identity
by conforming to its host
and adapting to the shape of its holder
Still having no equal,
remaining one of a kind,
Waiting patiently to be received,
But often accepted without notice.
Disregarded as ineffectual,
No-one cares about the color of rain.

Thought Process 20.4

Sophia Domeville

I can't eat anymore like I used to,
My body has become knotted
Twisted,
Threaded,
To my very being
Pulsating for the beat of hope
A drum for laughter and a taste for love
Delicious
Sweet
My tongue lapping at the sides of my mouth
For the curiosity of wonder,
Yet taste the bitter,
Cracked
Over drawn dream
Of concise
Conscience.

Capturing Radiance

Erin Flores

A blanket of black
No trees, no road, not even my hand
Pure blackness invades me

My eyes wander to the sky

I find I am no longer alone
A pair of twins, two spoons, even bears
Greet me and illuminate my night

I search for more

An archer, a crab, a queen
I blink and finally see
The blackness of the trees, the road, even my hand

Dimensions

Alisha Mills

Sometimes
I whisper your name when I think of you
And then I glance at a distant star
Knowing that the light that shines on me
Will also shine on you
I close my eyes
And I breathe hope
I breathe joy
I breathe freedom
I breathe life into my very soul
And suddenly
When I open my eyes
There you are standing beside me
You embrace me
All my troubles seem to go away
You kiss me
And a ray of light shines through my heart
You speak to me
And your words inspire me
Comfort me
I long for you
And still
I take pleasure in the wait

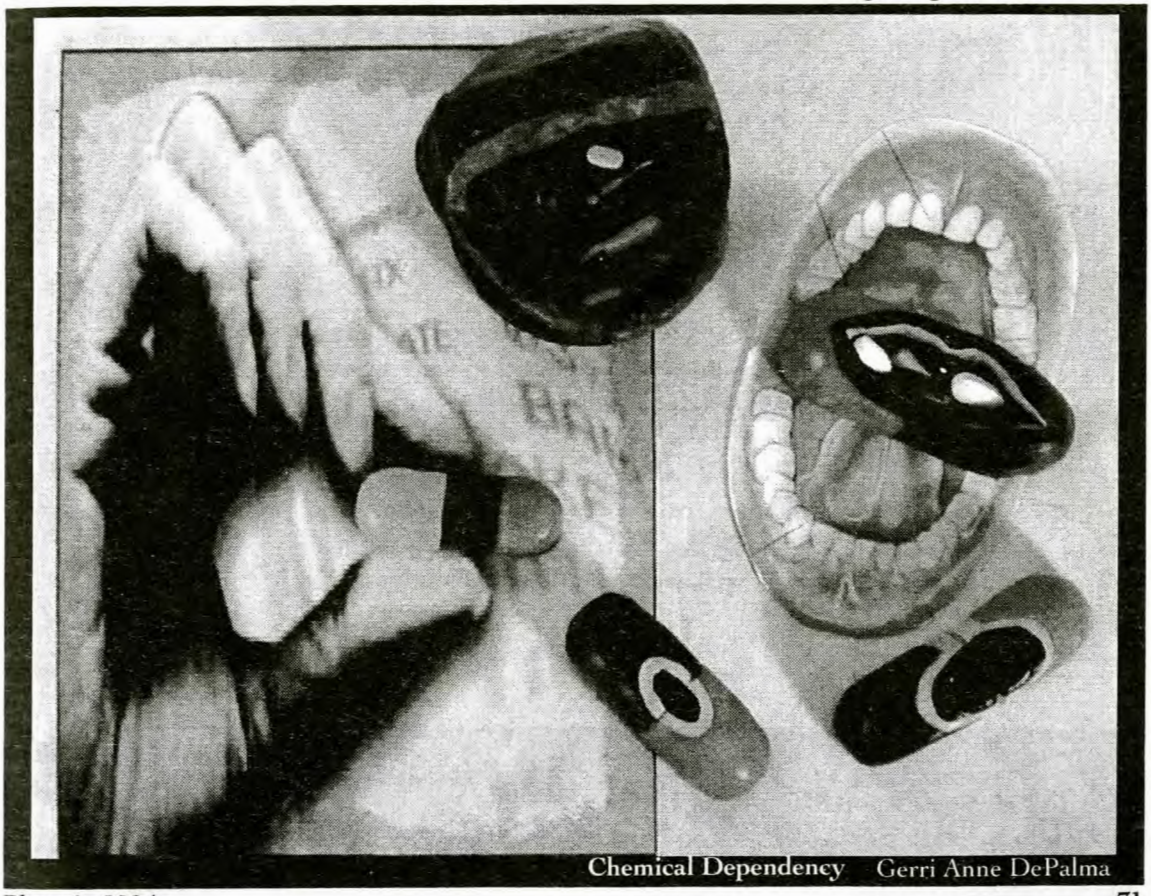
Once Again

Janeith Wright

The chapter has ended
But the book has more to tell
The path proved to be a cul-de-sac
Yet the journey is just beginning

Senses now fully awakened
But for how long
Will they remain dishabituated to this new song?

Unaware of the future
In the past weathered the storm
Shaken but still stable
Preparing for another start



Chemical Dependency Gerri Anne DePalma

Ash Wednesday

Ewa Tabak

Morning bodies struggle with temptations,
And various ones, depending on the day,
As well as cruel human inclinations.

The way they try to face their destinations
Depends upon November or a May.
Morning bodies struggle with temptations,

They suffer wealth and deprivations
(The choice between the work and play)
As well as cruel human inclinations.

Regardless of interpretations
Of midnight's dreams, delightful getaways,
Morning bodies struggle with temptations.

As opposed to someone else's expectations
The question is: do they want to leave or stay?
(As well as cruel human inclinations?)

The myth of dreams realizations
Should burn with cigarettes in ashtrays.
Morning bodies struggle with temptations
As well as cruel human inclinations.

Ease

Kathryn M. Tyranski

I want to go back
To where I have been
In state of grace
Where my heart would race
And all would be at ease

It is an apparent change
From then to now
I am somewhat lost
But all actions in life cost
Perhaps ease will come again
It was an ultimate high
Being there
I was involved, in a moment of rapture
There isn't many a situation that can capture
Such ease

I live in the moment
But hold onto the past
I remember the person time and place
Nothing could overtake that moment in space
You make me feel at ease

Sunbeam

Ewa Tabak

this little sword
reaches me at springtime
sharp

always aims for
my eyes

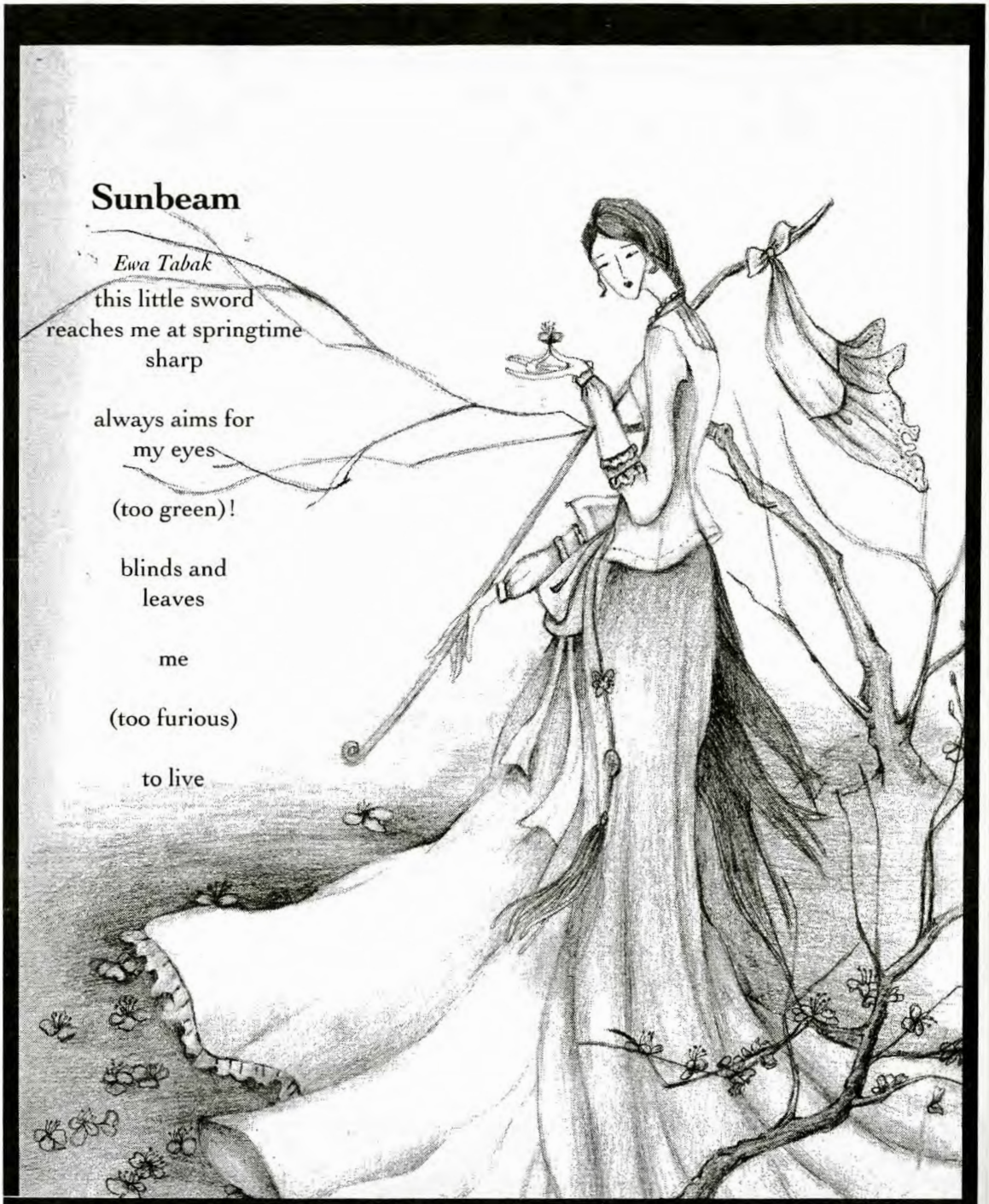
(too green)!

blinds and
leaves

me

(too furious)

to live



Lady with Flowers Jing Jin

